

Housing Commission Meeting Minutes for February 23rd, 2022

Location: Walter Stiles Conference Room, City Hall, 2nd floor

I. Meeting called to order at 5:06pm

II. Welcome and Roll Call

o Members Present:

1. Jean Mugabo
2. Jessica Margeson
3. Kate Marquis - alternate
4. Peter Capano
5. Joe Wichert - alternate
6. Zach Palmer
7. Chris Wellington

III. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes - 2/9/22 - 5:08

- o Commissioner Mugabo suggested adding language to the “Elections” section to include the discussion regarding Commissioner’s commission and organization experience and the role of the Chair.

MOTION: to approve the February 9, 2022 Housing Commission Meeting Minutes as amended made by Commissioner Palmer and seconded by Commissioner Margeson. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Old Business - 5:15

a. Bylaws

- o Commissioners reviewed a Housing Commission bylaws draft created from Conservation and Heritage Commission bylaws.
- o Commissioner Margeson brought up discussion on Section XII: Amendments, items A & B, on suspending vs. amending bylaws and what the vote count should be. Consensus was reached to keep the wording but change the vote count to four-fifths on both sub-sections.
- o Commissioner Wichert shared that a bylaw review in a year would be a good way to find out what works and what may need revising. Commissioner Marquis agreed.
- o Commissioner Marquis brought up a couple of items that may need more discussion. Section II:B - Composition. Should the Commission require

ward variety in the bylaws? Members shared their ward and the members all live in different wards. General consensus that this would be nice, but not needed with current make up, but the group will revisit when bylaws are reviewed next year. Section II:C - Staggering terms. Chair Capano spoke with City Solicitor. This particular item is in the City Ordinance that created the Commission, so the Commission can't change it. Section III:A - Officers, officers are voted in yearly.

- Commissioner Wellington asked the group whether there should be a Vice Chair position to serve as Chair when the Chair is unavailable. Discussion on how that might look or alternative ways to cover the position. Consensus that Chair Capano will appoint a temporary Chair in the event of a planned absence. The Commission will revisit in a year during bylaw review to see if it needs to be adjusted.
- Commissioner Wellington asked how the Treasurer position/Fund works. Commissioner Wichert spoke with Sharon Wickens and the Fund is completely separate. There was a re-read of the original ordinance to review the fund.
- Discussion on Section III:B:1 - add general before Robert's Rules of Order.
- Discussion on Section XI - Housing Commission Fund section will need legal review. Typo fixes and remove word "Hand" from Section VI:D - Meetings.
- Commissioner Margeson asked what constitutes a recusal, Section VII. Discussion on this topic including non-binding vs. binding votes. Language changed to make it binding by four-fifths vote.
- **Consensus was reached** to make all the agreed upon changes to the proposed Housing Commission Bylaws and send to City Solicitor for review.
- Discussion on whether the language in Section IX:Committees needed to be more specific since it's quite vague; make up and type of committees. Consensus was to leave vague for now and revisit in a year with the bylaws review.

b. Housing Needs Assessment

- Chair Capano shared that the Southern NH Planning Commission will be conducting a needs assessment for our region. Part of the assessment will be extensive outreach to get a cross section of residents. Chair Capano shared the Commission would like to give a presentation to our Housing Commission.
- Guest Dean Christon, Former Director of the NH Housing Finance Authority, shared background on the assessment from the state level and added that SNHPC may need help with outreach for survey.
- Commissioner Wichert shared that Jeff Belanger from the City Planning Department may be willing to do a zoom interview with Commission regarding the zoning rewrite.
- Commissioner Wellington suggested members should visit other commissions to get to know processes and people.
- **Consensus was reached** to have SNHPC come to the next Housing Commission meeting March 9th.

V. New Business – 6:18

a. Code-A-Palooza™

- Discussion on event and purpose.
- Commissioner Marquis asked if this is something the Housing Commission should attend to advocate for the Task Force findings, to listen, and for the Housing Commission to be seen out in the public.
- Comments and discussion included the Housing Commission being too new to have a position yet or to make public comment; Members should go as individuals, not as Housing Commissioners; Wait for completion of housing study before advocating; and that the members could go to speak with public or answer questions.
- **Consensus was reached** to encourage members to attend, but no formal Housing Commission representation at event.

b. Commission Statements/Goals, Interests, Next Steps

- Discussion on public Housing Commission statements. Commissioner Wellington shared that all statements should go through the Commission Chair.

- Discussion from Commissioners on goals including Commissioner Palmer considering a subcommittee of developers to find out what they need to do the work; Commissioner Wellington suggesting others what they see as Housing Commission goals; Commissioner Wichert discussing voluntary incentives and opportunity zones; Commissioner Margeson discussing poor housing stock and code enforcement.
- Chair Capano suggested Commissioners think about what type of subcommittees they'd like to create for the next meeting.
- Continued discussion on Commissioner's experiences with code enforcement. Commissioner Marquis shared that it would be valuable to gather many different types of experiences and share them so the public understands the challenges to the problem - from homeless to developer, to small home owner. The whole Commission could share folks they come across that might make an interesting angle to the challenges being faced. Commissioner Mugabo shared that he would be interested in contributing articles to help the public understand the work being done.

VI. Motion to Adjourn

Motion: Commissioner Palmer motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Mugabo seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting is adjourned at 7:10pm

Next meeting is March 9, 2022 at 5pm in the Walter Stiles Conference Room, 2nd Floor, City Hall.